

2.

THE
RELIGIOUS
INSTRUCTION
OF
CHILDREN
RECOMMENDED.

By the Rev. JAMES STONHOUSE, M.D.
Formerly of St JOHN'S COLLEGE, OXFORD.

*The little, and almost insensible Impressions on our tender
Infancies, have very important and lasting Consequences.*

LOCKE on Education.

Delightful Task! to rear the tender Thought,

To teach the young Idea how to shoot,

And pour the fresh Instruction o'er the Mind.

THOMPSON'S Seasons.

THE THIRD EDITION.

L O N D O N:

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P R E F A C E.

THE too general Neglect of the religious Instruction of Children, ought to engage the serious Concern of Parents; and indeed of all others, who wish well to the Happiness of the rising Generation, and the true Interest of Society: For unless Children are carefully brought up in the Principles of the Christian Religion, they will be greatly deficient in their Duty to GOD, Themselves, and their Neighbour. — The Christian Religion reaches the Heart, discovers its Corruption, shews the Necessity of its being cleansed from its Defilements, and formed anew after the divine Image: It points out the Means of correcting the Disorders of our fallen Nature, and teaches the Way to obtain a blessed Immortality through a Redeemer.

While so many polite, and even (in Respect to this World) useful Accomplishments, are carefully attended to in the Education of Children, how shall we account for the too prevailing

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vailing *Disregard to Religion, which is the most important Part of it?* Many modern Christians have Reason to blush on comparing the present relaxed Mode of fashionable Education with the daily and pious Labours of our Forefathers, and the exact Discipline which they maintained. They diligently instructed their Children in the Doctrines and Precepts of Christianity; well considering, that little was to be expected from those who were not properly brought up from their Infancy in the Knowledge and Practice of them. — Should not this Consideration likewise animate all Instructors of Children to endeavor to form their Hearts and Lives on the Principles and Rules of the Gospel of CHRIST? — Surely it should: And then they may reasonably hope that the Blessing of GOD will attend their Endeavors.

I could wish to recommend to those who are desirous of setting about the religious Instruction of their Children in good Earnest, the attentive and frequent Perusal of Dr Doddridge's Treatise ON THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN *: And I am the more solicitous

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* This is not only a very useful, but a very cheap Book; (Price 1 s.) and may be had at RIVINGTON'S in St Paul's Churchyard; or of the Country Booksellers, as most of them send weekly for Books to their Correspondents in London.

P R E F A C E. v

to recommend it, as there they will find the Subject illustrated, and enforced on a Plan somewhat similiar to this; and, as I apprehend, it may be greatly beneficial both to Parents and Children, if it be not their own Fault.

I readily allow, that there are many Parents and Guardians, Schoolmasters and Mistresses, who have no Need of the Information contained in this little Treat; but it must be allowed, on the other Hand, that there are many who have, and to whom (I hope) it may be useful; especially as it is written in a plain Style suitable to the Matter, and addressed personally. The Soul is of inestimable Worth; and our spiritual Interests are doubtless of much more Consequence than our temporal: If therefore any Thing here suggested should excite in Parents, or others, a greater Solitude to promote the eternal Welfare of the Children committed to their Care; and be in any Degree instrumental in pointing out the Manner of doing it, the Design of this Publication will be fully answered: And it is my Heart's Desire and Prayer that, in this Age of Levity and Dissipation, it may conduce to so important an End.

BRISTOL,
Oct. 25, 1774.

An Extract from a Sermon of the late Bishop of Sodor and Man, (Dr Wilfon) concerning the Method of educating Children, preached at the Yearly Meeting of the Children educated in the Charity Schools in and about the Cities of London and Westminster.*

IT can never be an Objection against the Christian Religion, that *all Men*, so soon as the Gospel is preached to them, do not see the Truth, and close with its most gracious Offers of Pardon and Happiness: For, if Men are not *disposed* to be serious; if they were *engaged* in sinful Courses; if they *shun* that Light, which would *shew* them to themselves; and *despise* those Means which God has ordained for their Conversion; it is no Wonder they do not, nay, it is impossible they should, believe the Gospel. — And this comes to pass, not by any *fatal Decree of God*, but from an utter *Indisposition* to hearken to the Truth, and to see their Interest in it: It is occasioned also by a Custom of acting against Reason and Conscience; — by leading a Life contrary to Holiness; by grieving the holy Spirit of God, by which they had been sanctified; and making it their Choice not to see the

Conse-

* This is a useful Sermon, and is printed in a Duodecimo Size, (Price 3 d. or 20 s. an Hundred) that well-disposed Persons might give them to poor Families.

Consequence of a Life spent in Ignorance and Sin. — For this Reason it is that *Children* are the most proper Subjects of an *Education* which regards another *Life*; — before they have been suffered to grow wild; — before their Souls shall have been *polluted*, their Senses *depraved*, their Minds and Memories *corrupted*, by evil Principles, and evil Examples: For, when it is *thus* with them, we shall find it the hardest Thing in the World to persuade them even to *bear* what we have to say on the Part of *Religion*. — Whereas *they*, who have the Happiness of being restrained *betimes*, and trained up in the *Fear of God*, will “*bear*” and *receive* with Meekness the ingrafted “*Word*, which is able to save their “*Souls*.”

It is a sad Condition indeed to be miserable without *knowing* it, and consequently without any *Inclination* to look out for *Help*. But is not this the Case of the greatest Part of Mankind? and ought not the *Cure* of the Malady to begin here? especially with Respect to those who are professedly taken in Hand to be delivered from this State of *Blindness* and *Misery*. — Should not this be the *first* and *great* Concern to plant the *Fear of God* in the Hearts of Children *betimes*; particularly by endeavouring to make them *see* and *feel* the *sad State* they are in *without the Blessing of a Redeemer*:

Thus we shall lay a good Foundation for saving Knowledge. But, if *that* be neglected, the general Duties of the Christian Religion may be taught without Effect: And they, who hear them, may live in a *formal* Profession of Christianity all their Days, and die in a Condition not better than that of Infidels. — In short, there is no governing the *outward* without first governing the *inward* Man. “ Out of the “ Heart, saith our Saviour, proceed evil “ Thoughts, Thefts, Fornications, Adul- “ teries, false Witness, Blasphemies,” *Matt.* xv. 19. — Now in Proportion as we have the *Fear of the Lord* in us, there is more or less Room for any of these to enter. — May the blessed Spirit of God create *in ourselves* and our *Children* clean Hearts, and implant in our Souls a Temper opposite to all these Enormities.

An Extract from Archbishop Tillotson's Six Sermons on Family Religion, and Education of Children, in Duodecimo, Fourth Edition, Page 123; or Page 531, Sermon 52, Vol. I. of the Folio Edition.*

TO all the Means we use, says Archbishop TILLOTSON, we must add our constant and earnest *Prayers to God* for our Children,

* These Six valuable Sermons may be had in a Pocket Volume at RIVINGTON'S, in St Paul's Church-yard, Price 2 s.

dren, that *his Grace* may take an *early Possession* of them, that He would give them virtuous Inclinations, and towardsly Dispositions for Goodness, and that He would be pleased to accompany all our Endeavours to that End with his *powerful Assistance and Blessing*; without which *all* that we can do will be *ineffectual*: Parents may *plant*, and Ministers may *water*, but it is God that must give *the Increase*.—Be often then on your Knees for your Children. Do not only teach them to pray *for themselves*, but do *you* likewise, with great Fervour and Earnestness, *commend them to God, and to the Power of his Grace*; which alone is able to sanctify them. Apply yourselves to *the Father of Lights, from whom cometh every good and perfect Gift*: Beg his holy Spirit, and ask *divine Knowledge and Wisdom* for them of Him, *who giveth liberally, and upbraideth not*: Beseech Him to season their tender Years with *his Fear, which is the Beginning of Wisdom*: Pray for them, as *Abraham* did for *Ishmael*; O! *that Ishmael may live before Thee*, Gen. xvii. 18. or, in thy Sight and Favour, and not be cast off.





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THE
RELIGIOUS
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OF
CHILDREN
RECOMMENDED.

THE religious Instruction of *Children* is of so much Importance to
T their Happiness, and to the Sup-
port of Religion and good Order
in the World, that it requires great At-
tention to *understand* its Nature and Extent,
and greater Diligence and Resolution to
practise it. It is a Duty so shamefully
neglected by *most* Parents, and so ill per-
formed by *many, who make a Conscience of*
it, that there is Need of frequent Exhor-
tation on this Head. It is therefore my
Intention to suggest some *serious Advice* on
this important Subject; and that it may
have the more Weight, I would remind
my Readers, that the Jews in the *Old*, and
the Christians in the *New Testament*, were
parti-

particularly commanded to instruct their Children. — In the *sixth* Chapter of *Deuteronomy* *, it is expressly said, “ These Words, “ which I *command* thee this Day, shall be “ in thy Heart, and thou shalt teach them “ diligently unto thy Children, and thou “ shalt talk of them, when thou sittest in “ thine House, and when thou walkest by “ the Way, and when thou liest down, “ and when thou risest up.” And in the *sixth* Chapter of the *Ephesians*, the *Apostle* has enjoined Parents to “ bring up their “ Children in the Nurture and Admoni- “ tion of the Lord.” May every Parent well weigh these important Commands !

To render what I propose on this Subject more easily understood and remembered, I shall divide it into Sections.

SECTION I.

THE Things in which Parents ought *more especially* to instruct their Children.

As

* In the fourth and fifth Verses of the Sixth Chapter of *Deuteronomy*, *Moses* had given the *Israelites* a *Summary of Religion*, as consisting in the *Belief* of one God, and a *supreme Love* to Him. He then commands them in the sixth and seventh Verses to keep these Words in their Hearts, to make them familiar to their Minds and the *Subject* of their frequent and serious *Reflections*, and also to *teach* them diligently to their *Children*, to take every Opportunity to inculcate on them the *Principles* of Religion, and to urge their *Practise* of its *Duties*.

As Religion takes in so large a Compass, I shall here hint only at the principal Things.

Children are to be early *instructed* in the Nature of their Souls, as distinct from their Bodies, and as possessing Powers and Capacities superior to their Bodies; as *spiritual* Substances of unspeakable Worth, and of an immortal Duration — that the Body is to die, that the Soul is to live for ever, and to be happy in Heaven, or punished in Hell.

They are to be *instructed* in the Nature of the great God, his Being, Perfections, and Providence; especially his *Omniscience*, his perfect *Knowledge* of all Things; his *Justice* in rendering to every Man according to his Works; his *Goodness* to all Mankind, and his *peculiar Favor* to them that love Him: I say they are to be *instructed* in these *Perfections* of God, as these are particularly adapted to *impress* the Minds of Children.

They are likewise to be taught the *Difference* between Good and Evil, Virtue and Vice; the respective Nature and Consequences of *each*, both with Regard to *this* and a *future* Life: that, if they are *good*, they will, through the *Mercy* of God, and the Merits of CHRIST, be rewarded in Heaven; and that, if they are *bad*, they will be cast into a Place of Misery and Torment.

They

They are to be informed that *the Scriptures* are a Revelation from Heaven, given by the Inspiration of the holy Spirit: And that they are *diligently* to be searched, as *no other* Writings contain “the Words of eternal Life.”

They are to be taught the *Doctrines* and *Ordinances* of CHRIST, as a divine *Teacher*, and his Love and Grace in dying for the Sins of Men, as a *Saviour*.

A general plain View of the *Scheme of Redemption* by our Lord JESUS CHRIST should frequently be given them; and the *Duties*, which he requires of his Disciples, should be laid before them.

It is the Business of Parents to lead their Children to an high Esteem for the *Word of God* and religious Ordinances, to a due Sense of the Vanity of the World, and an earnest Solicitude about the Salvation of their own Souls.

It will be proper and necessary to give them *frequent Views* of the Relations and Circumstances in Life in which they are, or may be placed, and of those *Duties* which, in Consequence of *these*, are incumbent on them.

S E C T I O N II.

THE Manner in which Parents should instruct their Children, recommended to their Consideration.

- I. *Your Instructions should be plain and easy.*

You

You must teach them only plain Things, and in a familiar *Manner* *. You are frequently to make these Things the Subject of your common Discourse with them, and speak of them as plainly and familiarly as you would of any Thing else you want them to learn or to do. This the Apostle St Paul figuratively expresses by “feeding them with Milk, and not with strong Meat, which they are not able to bear,” 1 Cor. iii. 2. — The *Capacities* of Children are to be consulted, and Parents should suit their Exhortations to them. In this View such Books should be put into their Hands, on religious Subjects, as are plain, practical and easy to be understood: For Children never learn any Thing with Pleasure which they do not understand: Nor are they likely to be impressed with, and retain what is *above* their Capacity. It is proper, in *instructing* them, to use such Expressions concerning the Things of God, as are taken from the Things of Men, and to endeavour to make them *understand* every Thing they learn.

2. *Your Instructions should be given mildly and cheerfully.*

They

* Children should be particularly taught this plain Rule, “Whatsoever ye would that others should do to you, do you so to them;” and their Actions should be examined by it.

They should not be given with a magisterial Air, or in the Way of a *solemn Lecture*; where the Hearer is kept as it were at a Distance, and not allowed to propose or to answer Questions. All angry or threatening Expressions are at this Season carefully to be avoided. And never can that *Caution* of the Apostle be more necessary, "Fathers, provoke not your Children to Anger," *Eph. vi. 4.* lest they should be discouraged. When *Instructions* are delivered with a dogmatical Air, an austere Aspect, and attended with Threats, Children are terrified and discouraged from attempting to learn, and remember them. Let your Children see, that you take *Pleasure* in *instructing* them. A mild Speech and cheerful Countenance are perfectly consistent with great Seriousness of Spirit, and with keeping up a proper Authority. Let them see, that all your Advice proceeds from *Love*. Let nothing rough and morose appear in your *Instructions*; but shew all Gentleness, which will give Weight and Influence to every Thing you say.

3. *Your Instructions should be frequent and short.*

Great Care must be taken that their Memory be not burdened with any Thing long and tedious. *Short Instructions* are best suited to the Imperfection of their Reason

Reason and the Weakness of their Memory. Let no Day pass in which your Children shall not hear something of Religion immediately addressed to them, and endeavour to graft some Hints of Advice and Instruction on *proper* Objects and Occurrences; especially on *those* which are peculiarly striking and remarkable. Every Day remind them either of some historical Passage, or some Promise or Threatening in Scripture. Besides these occasional *daily* Hints, *Sunday Evenings* ought to be *devoted* to this important Work. You should then not only read the Scripture, and Books of practical Religion to your Families, but talk familiarly to your Children concerning what they have been hearing at Church, and endeavour to fix divine Truths in their *Memories* and *Hearts*. These frequent short *Instructions* are in Effect recommended by the Prophet *Isaiab* in the following Words, "Whom shall He teach Knowledge? and
"whom shall He make to *understand* Doctrine? Them that are weaned from the
"Milk, and drawn from the Breasts: For
"Precept must be upon Precept, Precept
"upon Precept; Line upon Line, Line
"upon Line; here a little, and there a
"little," *Isa.* xxviii. 9, 10.

4. Your Instructions should be given with great Seriousness, so as to shew that your
own

own Hearts are affected with what you teach your Children.

Let not your Instructions be given in a *formal* Way, as if it were a *Task*: But let them see that you speak out of the Abundance of your Hearts what you know and feel, relish and love. Never mention the Name of God before them without the profoundest Veneration, that they may see you reverence and fear Him. When you speak of the Worth of the Soul, and the awful Solemnities of Death and Judgment, Heaven and Hell, let them see by the Seriousness of your Countenance, and Manner of Address, that you are sensible of *your own* Concern in these Things. When you speak of the Love of God and of CHRIST, there should be such a deep and grateful *Sense* of it in *your own* Hearts, that they may perceive you are impressed with it. They will be likely to feel, when they see that *you* feel. View them as immortal Souls allied to the Father of Spirits, and as committed to *your* Care. Tell them how *solicitous* you are for their Welfare, and let them see by the Earnestness with which you address them, and pray for them, that you really *are* so. You will thus secure your Interest in their *Hearts*, and they will attend and learn with Pleasure, when they perceive that you are greatly

greatly concerned in the Success of your Address to them.

5. *Your Instructions should be suited to their natural Temper, which ought therefore to be carefully observed.*

Every wise Husbandman considers the *Nature of the Soil* which he is to cultivate, that he may manure and sow it accordingly. Those who are to cultivate the *Mind*, ought to be particularly studious that their *Instructions* should be proper and seasonable. To consult the Temper, and to keep a watchful Eye over the Conduct of Children, is undoubtedly the Duty of Parents: For one Child may be preserved by that Behaviour of its Parents, which may destroy another. Labour to root out every vicious Disposition, as soon as you perceive it. Caution them against those Miscarriages of which you see them in danger. Point out to them those Texts of Scripture which forbid such Things, and require the contrary Behaviour. Set before them the Examples of pious Children and Youth who have avoided such Sins, and have been eminent for the opposite Virtues. There is frequently as much difference in Childrens *Minds*, as in their *Faces*. And *observing* Parents may easily know what their prevailing Disposition is, especially if they will take Notice

of their Behaviour to one another, particularly at their Play; of their Behaviour to Servants and other Inferiors, and suit their Instructions accordingly. Level all your Force against the Sins which most easily beset them, and endeavour to persuade and engage them to abstain from all *Appearances of Evil.*

6. *It is necessary to add, that your Instructions should be given with an humble Dependence on the Grace and Spirit of God.*

“ God formed the Spirit of Man within him, and teaches him Knowledge.” He knows how to influence and work on the human Mind, to urge it forward, or to restrain it. Pray therefore daily to the Father of Lights, that he would follow your Attempts to teach your Children with his *Blessing*, that He would give them tractable Minds, and make them willing and obedient.—It is in vain for you “ to plant “ and water, unless God give the Increase.” Pray earnestly for your Children every Time you bow your Knees before the Lord in secret; and especially in your Families.—Let them perceive that you do this with a most tender Concern, and deep Seriousness, which will be likely at once to *impress* their *Hearts*, and to draw down a divine *Blessing* on them: For there are

many gracious *Promises* of God's Readiness to hear Prayer, and particularly to pour down his Spirit on the Children of his faithful Servants.

SECTION III.

Motives to induce Parents to the religious *Instruction* of their Children.

1. *There is great Reason to hope, that the religious Instruction of your Children, will be profitable to them.*

This is a *Motive* to attempt it. On this *Principle* you act every Day in common Life. You plough and sow, work and trade, in Hope of *Profit*. And you have an agreeable Prospect of Success in endeavouring to form the Minds of your infant Offspring to Knowledge and Goodness.

For consider, *that their Minds are tender and impressible*; pliable like Wax, and ready to receive any Impression. They come into the World perfect Strangers to every Thing in it, and they have so many new Objects to contemplate, so many new Ideas to receive, that the Mind is easily struck. The great *commanding Principles* of our Natures, *Hope* and *Fear*, soon influence them, and many *religious Motives* are addressed to these *Affections*. They are open to Sentiments of Gratitude and Kindness: A little Favor

Favor obliges them, and it is easy to graft on this some general Love of God, and a Sense of the Obligations they are under to Him. These Impressions will be deep and strong in Proportion to the Apprehension which Children have of the Importance of the Things they are taught, and the Influence which the Instructor has over them. Solomon's Advice concerning Correction may be applied to Instruction: "Instruct thy Son while there is Hope," Prov. ix. 18. while the Mind is tender, and good Impressions may easily be made.

Consider farther, that the Minds of Children are less influenced by Prejudice than the Minds of those in the Advance of Life. They are less liable to be biased by a wrong Judgement concerning Persons and Things, formed without Evidence and Examination. For long Commerce with the World indisposes Men for the Reception of divine Truths, and thus obstructs the Acquisition of the most important Knowledge. The Mind of a Child lies quite open to Conviction, and receives religious Instruction (prudently and gently given) without any secret Dislike. And if Parents behave well to their Children, they will regard and reverence what they say. Children have not those Prejudices against Religion which a wrong Education, bad Examples, and Satan's Devices excite in the Minds of those who are grown up. The natural Curiosity and

and Desire of Knowledge, which God has implanted in the human Mind, begin to work *early*, and are very encouraging Circumstances. Where the Cultivation of the Mind has been neglected in *Childhood*, there are innumerable Weeds to be pulled up before any good Seed can be sown. But with Regard to *Children*, the Way is clear, the Soil open and free; though, on Account of the Depravity of human Nature, not so kindly as could be wished.

Consider farther, *that they are less inflamed by irregular Appetites and Passions*. Tho' the Harmony of human Nature, and the regular Subordination of its Powers, are by Man's Apostacy from God much lost; yet it is a considerable Time before irregular Passions begin to work. It is not in *Childhood* that the most dangerous sensual Appetites, the Love of Money and some other irregular Passions begin to be predominant. That Children are in general free from those Passions which would obstruct their Progress in Knowledge and Goodness, seems evident from these Words of our Saviour, "Except ye be converted, and become as *little Children*, ye cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven:" And from what the Apostle says, "In Malice be ye *Children*," 1 Cor. xiv. 20. It is true indeed we perceive Children *early* under the Influence of *Pride* and *Ambition*: But this is generally owing to the *Folly of their*

Parents and Instructors: And, where this is the Case, these Passions of Pride and Ambition may be made the *Means* or *Instruments* of promoting the *Improvement* of such Children in *Wisdom* and *Religion*: For they may be made *ambitious* to *excel* others in what is *truly valuable*, without despising them, and without being *vain* of their own *Superiority*. The *Work of Education* is in general *too long* delayed: And to *this* principally must be imputed the *Growth* of those Passions, which hinder them from receiving *Instruction*. Parents should be solicitous to secure their own *Authority*, and the *Obedience* of their *Children*, from their *Infancy*: And if *that* Time be improved, the *rest* of their *Education* will be comparatively *easy*. It is evident, that those Impressions which are *first* made on the *Mind*, will be likely to *continue*; and those *Admonitions* which are inculcated by the *Instruction* and *Example* of wise and affectionate Parents, will have an *abiding* Effect. It is on this *Principle* *Solomon's* Exhortation is founded, "Train up a Child
" in the Way he should go, and when he
" is old he will not depart from it," *Prov.*
xxii. 6.

2. *The religious Instruction of your Children will be much for your own Comfort.*

It

It is evidently the *Command* of God in Scripture, as well as the plain *Dictate* of Reason, that you should *instruct* your Children; and the Discharge of any Branch of Duty is attended with present Pleasure. The Mind enjoys Satisfaction in performing any Part of the Will of God. Your natural Love to your Children, makes it pleasant to you to do any Thing which may promote their real Interest. It lessens the Fatigue of your daily Business to think that you are contriving the Good, and employed for the Support of the Family which God has given you, and that you may be able to furnish your *Children* with those Means and Accomplishments by which they may subsist, and be useful and honourable in the World. But to *instruct* them in Religion will afford you, if you are wise, *peculiar* Pleasure; because in doing *this* you are labouring to cultivate their *Minds*, to improve their *Understanding*, to form their *Conduct*, to enrich their *Souls*, and thus lead them to the Love and Favour of God, and lay a *Foundation* for their *eternal* Happiness. What a Satisfaction will it be to find them attending to your *Instructions* with Diligence and Seriousness! And this they generally speaking will do, if you give these in the *Manner* before mentioned. But your greatest Comfort will be to see (as I hope and believe you will) the good *Effects*

of your Instructions. To observe them thoughtful about Religion and their Souls, careful in Reading, diligent in attending Public Worship, watchful to observe the Sabbath, shunning Temptations to sin, avoiding evil Company, and fearing the Lord from their Youth, will afford you substantial Heart-felt Pleasure. Your Joy will increase, when you see them fixed in useful Stations, improving and practising the Instructions of their Youth, and taking the same pious Care of their Children, as you took of them. For, as Solomon observes, "A wise Son maketh a glad Father," Prov. x. 1. "My Son, if thou be wise, my Heart shall rejoice, even mine," Prov. xxi. 15. And good Men have no greater Joy, than to see that "their Children walk in Truth," 3 John 4. It will support and comfort you on a dying Bed, to think that you have left useful Knowledge and Religion as a sacred Entail on your Posterity; and that, though you may not be able to leave them much worldly Substance, you have, through the divine Blessing, left such Principles and Dispositions in their Heads and Hearts, as will never be lost, but will carry them safely through this dangerous World, and (through the Riches of divine Grace) secure their eternal Felicity.

3. Farther,

3. Further, the religious Instruction of
your Children will tend to support Piety
and Virtue in the World.

All good Men are desirous to contribute
their Part to this. They will be solicitous
to exert their utmost Ability to restrain in-
creasing Iniquity, and to support the Cause
of Religion. They will labour and pray,
that "one Generation may arise and de-
clare God's mighty Works unto ano-
ther," and that CHRIST may still have
a Seed to serve Him in the midst of a
crooked and perverse Generation. Now
how is this important Effect to be produced,
but by religious Instruction? Is not the
Want of a good Education the principal
Cause of the Abounding of Ignorance, Pro-
faneness, and a stupid Neglect of Religion?
Many Parents (I fear most of them) take
no Pains to instruct their Children in the
Knowledge, Fear, and Love of God, neg-
lect to catechize them, and mispend in Idle-
ness and Amusements that Part of the
Lord's Day which ought especially to be
employed in this Work. Hence so many
ignorant, untractable, sensual Youths, in
every Town and Neighbourhood. Hence
many, who well understand Trades, and
the common Business of Life, are quite
ignorant of the Scriptures, of their Guilt
and Danger as Sinners, and the Method

of Salvation by JESUS CHRIST. To this *Ignorance* it is in a great Measure owing, that God's Name is profaned, that his Ordinances are despised, and that a Regard for every Thing manly, grave, and serious, is quite destroyed by that *Love of Pleasure and Dissipation*, which is the peculiar Characteristic of the present Age. In Order to correct this growing Degeneracy a religious *Education* is necessary. *Here* a general Reformation must *begin*. Youth must be *well instructed* in the *Principles* of Religion; carefully restrained from the Paths of Vice and Folly, and the Interest of their Souls chiefly consulted in the Disposal and Settlement of them: And then (but not till then) we may justly hope, that the *next* Generation will be better than *this*; that the Knowledge of GOD and CHRIST will prevail in it, that Religion will become more general and fashionable, and spread through succeeding Generations. Thus will GOD be glorified, the Credit of the Gospel be promoted, and all who are Well-wishers to the Happiness of Mankind will see this and rejoice in the Prospect.

4. Moreover, *the religious Instruction of your Children will be the most likely Means to promote their Happiness in this World, and in the next.*

There

There cannot be a more detestable Character than that of a Parent who is without *natural Affection*. And can *that* be called the *natural Affection* of a rational Creature, which extends only to the *Bodies*, and not to the *Souls* of his Offspring? Surely they have neither the Faith of *Christians*, nor the Reason of *Men*, (but are indeed like *Brutes*) who take no Care of their Childrens *Souls*, give them no proper Instructions, no just Notions of God, of themselves, or Eternity. Consider your Children as intended to be Members of Society, and to fill up some Station in the World: and consider them especially as related to the World of Spirits, and intended for an eternal Existence: You will *then* soon see, that their Happiness greatly depends on a good Education. Without *this* they are likely to continue ignorant and insensible, destitute of good Principles, the Sport of their own Appetites and Passions, and the Prey of every Temptation. No Accomplishments, with which you can furnish them, will make them truly happy, unless the *Fear of God* rule in their Heart. No other Principle will keep them firm to their Duty, and make them uniformly and steadily good. Nothing *else* will render them good Husbands or Wives, Masters or Servants, honest Tradesmen, or diligent Workmen. Or if they behave tolerably in these Relations, so as to avoid the Censure of

When they will not be approved of God
 without acting from this inward Principle.
 Without this they must be Strangers to the
 Pleasures of Religion, to the Joy of a good
 Conscience, to all Interest in Christ, and
 to a well-grounded Hope of eternal Glory.
 Let it be further considered, that if Pa-
 rents do not properly instruct their Children,
 if their Education be neglected, no other
 Means will be likely to influence them.
 There is little Hope that they will be pro-
 fited by the Prayers and Discourses they
 may hear at Church: For, not being taught
 at Home the Principles of Religion, they
 can scarcely understand the plainest Ser-
 mons, and most forcible Exhortations, but
 attend Public Worship without Edifica-
 tion. Hence they are easily "tossed to
 and fro by every Wind of Doctrine,"
 having no spiritual Discernment; and con-
 sequently the most useful Ministers often
 (to their great Concern) labour in vain.
 They will likewise be discouraged from
 learning when they grow up, because no
 proper Foundation was laid in their Youth.
 Whereas "it is good for the Soul to be
 "early filled with Knowledge: Its facul-
 ties will then be spiritually exercised, and
 it will easily distinguish Good and Evil.
 This is necessary to prevent your Children
 from being seduced by the Errors of Po-
 pery, the Proselytes to which are generally
 the ignorant and untaught. Besides, if
 you

you diligently *teach* them the *Commandments* of *God*, they will be likely to *adhere* to them. *These* will follow and restrain them wherever they go, and may recover them to their Duty, if at any Time *drawn aside* from it. But it is probable that they will persevere in their Duty, and grow stronger and stronger. Their Characters will brighten, their Graces improve, their Comforts abound, and they will be enabled through *CHRIST* to look into Eternity without dismay. — Finally, you will have a cheerful Hope that you shall meet them in Glory, and be for ever with *them*, and with the *Lord*; and surely no *Motive* can be more powerful than *this*, to engage you to comply with what I have here suggested.

SECTION IV.

General Advice to Parents, and a short Exhortation to Children.

Let me, in an Affair of so much Importance, advise you who are Parents not to neglect the religious Instruction of your Children.

Gratitude to *God*, “who setteth the solitary in Families, and whose Heritage Children are,” requires *this* of you. He has expressly, strongly, and frequently com-
manded

manded this, and *promised* his *Blessing* to it. The Lord JESUS CHRIST, to whose Grace and Love you are infinitely obliged, will be pleased with your Care in "feeding his Lambs." His Example, in the tender Notice He took of little Children, and his blessing them, should be an *additional* Engagement to this. A *Regard* to *their* Happiness and your *own*, concur to enforce this Duty. Let them be taught to read, and to read distinctly and carefully: Hear them read the Scripture, and practical Books *yourselves*. Explain to them *what* they read to the best of your Judgement; and do something of this every Day: For so the Law of God commands; and the Command * is directly levelled against that common but trifling *Excuse* for Neglect of this, that you have not *Time*. For there is scarcely a Day but you have Opportunity to talk to them, either in the House or by the Way, lying down or rising up. See that you enforce and recommend all your *Instructions* by a good *Example*; and "do not

* I repeat the Command here because it is so very important. "These Words, which I command thee
 "this Day, shall be in thy Heart, and thou shalt
 "teach them diligently unto thy Children, and
 "thou shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine
 "House, and when thou walkest by the Way, and
 "when thou liest down, and when thou risest up,"
 Deut. vi, 6, 7.

“not (as a celebrated Writer * expresses it) point out to them the Way to Heaven by your good Counsel, and lead them by the Hand in the Way to Hell by your bad Example.” If you neglect this weighty Care, you will feel the bad Consequences, and eat the Fruit of your own Neglect. They will probably be a Disgrace to your Families, a Nuisance to the Neighbourhood, useless or corrupt Members of Society: They will spread the Contagion of Vice still wider; and, if ever God opens your Eyes to see the Worth of your own Souls, your Neglect of theirs will wound you deeply; and that, together with their ill Behaviour, will bring down your gray Hairs with Sorrow to the Grave. And think (O! think, ere it be too late) what a dreadful Meeting you will have with them at the Judgement-seat of CHRIST, when you must answer for the Neglect of their Souls; and that your Punishment will be increased in Proportion to the Warnings you have slighted, and the Opportunities you have disregarded.

2. *Let me farther advise you (as it is your truest Wisdom) thankfully to accept and improve*

* See Archbishop Tillotson's Six Sermons on Family Religion, and the Education of Children: The Fourth Edition in Duodecimo, Page 99: Or the Fifty first of his Sermons in the Folio Edition, Vol. I. P. 531.

improve whatever Helps you have for the religious Instruction of your Children.

The Church, sensible of the great Importance of this Duty, requires its Ministers to catechize the Children of their respective Parishes. Sorry I am that it is in too many Places so much neglected, or performed in so superficial a Manner, as not to answer the End proposed by it. But one Reason of this Neglect may be, that Parents will not send their Children to be catechized; and when they do, they take no Pains to second public Instructions at Home. If Ministers are willing to exert themselves for your Childrens Good, it is a very ungrateful and unjustifiable Conduct towards them, as well as an Injury to your Children; not to require and oblige them to learn their Catechism, and to attend on public Instructions in it. There have been, and still are some in the exalted Stations of Life, who have made Conscience of having their Children thus publicly catechized in the Church, which is a very laudable Example, and has been instrumental in causing the like Attendance in others. And it would be highly commendable and beneficial, if all (especially those in the higher Ranks) would act in the same Manner. For in the House of God, "the Rich and the Poor meet to-

gether. Their Souls are equally valuable and immortal, and both of them need Instruction. Besides, the Solemnity of the Day, the Place, and the Congregation, are adapted to impress it on young Minds: And there is a peculiar Reason to expect the divine Blessing to attend public Instruction. Every faithful Minister will discharge this Duty, and it will be an Encouragement to Him to see his People thankful for his friendly Attempts of this Nature, and careful that their Children should gain all possible Advantages by them: And their public Attendance on such Instructions will increase their Esteem and Affection for a Minister who diligently endeavours to improve them, and will dispose them to receive and profit by all his other Exhortations and Advice.

3. Let me exhort you, who are Children, to be thankful for the religious Instructions

* In some extensive Parishes, where the Church is not large enough to contain the Inhabitants, the Aisles are so crowded, that the Children cannot be catechized there during divine Service. Consequently under such Circumstances the Minister is prevented from giving that public Instruction enjoined by the Rubric; but he may catechize them in the Vestry or Chancel, either before or after the Service, and do all in his Power to supply the Advantages of a more public Examination by his Attention to them in private.

tions you receive, and carefully to improve them.

I have been here pleading your Cause, who scarcely know at present of how much Advantage these Things will hereafter be to you. I hope your Parents will be prevailed on to instruct you; and I desire and hope, that you will be thankful for their Instructions, carefully attend to them, and never be heedless nor trifle, while they are reading or speaking to you. You ought to be very serious in attending, and very diligent in learning, because they teach you the Things of God, the Way to be wise and holy, good and happy, both here and for ever. Let your Minister, when he applies to the important Work of catechising, observe, that you are attentive, diligent, and tractable. Let the Bible* and religious Books be your Study and Delight; and see that you practise what you are taught,

* It is the Advice of Dr Watts, in his very useful little Treatise on the Education of Children and Youth, (Page 21 of the Duodecimo Edition, Price Two Shillings) "that the Memory of a Child should every Day be entrusted with something new; and that every Sunday, at least, even in their youngest Years, they should learn by heart some Text of Scripture; chiefly that on which the Minister preaches: This will grow up in Time to a considerable Treasure of scriptural Knowledge, which will be of unspeakable use to them in the Christian Life."

taught, and *know* to be *right* and *good*. Let those who have enjoyed the *Advantage* of a religious Education, be careful to *improve* it, and ambitious to *grow* in Favor both with God and *Man*. And let *all* who are *young* apply to God, as “the *Guide* of their *Youth*,” and *pray* that He would by his *Spirit* enlighten their *Understandings*, and form in their *Hearts* every good Temper and Disposition, that they may be a Comfort to their Parents, a Credit to themselves, an Ornament to Society, and a **Support to Religion.**





SOME
FORMS
OF

PRAYER.

AS many *Parents*, who would pray for their *Children*, and as some *young Persons*, who would pray for their *Parents*, and for *Grace* to improve their *Instructions*, may find it difficult to express the immediate *Sentiments* or *Feelings* of their *Hearts* in *Words*, the following *Forms of Prayer* may perhaps be of some *Assistance* to them. Any *Sentence* may be added, omitted, or changed, to suit their own *particular Circumstances*; For it is not to be supposed, that a *serious Christian* can, when praying in *Secret*, present to *God* all his *peculiar Necessities* in a few *general Petitions* precomposed by *another*. Such *special Sins*, *Mercies*, and *Wants* may, and often do occur,

cur, as no human Sagacity can foresee, much less any human Form ~~the~~ *in* a proper Manner.

“Prayer by Book (says Bishop *Wilkins*) floats for the most Part too much in Generalities, and is not particular enough for each several Occasion.” Those therefore who have been accustomed to pray only by a Book, may at first add to their Prayers such Sentences as their Circumstances may suggest. When they can do this readily they will be capable of making a further Progress; and thus gradually acquire an Habit * of expressing their own Sense in their own Language; and of performing their Devotions in private without the Help of a Book. The Ability to pray thus freely is a very desirable and useful Attainment; but this cannot be accomplished without a diligent Use of our Talents, which will be improved by devout and constant Practice.

In acquiring the Habit of Praying in this Manner, they may be greatly assisted by Dr *Watts's* Prayer, composed for the Use and Imitation of Children; by Bishop *Wilkins* on the Gift of Prayer, and by Henry's Method of Prayer, [Tenth Edition.]

A

A PARENT'S Prayer for a Child, or Children.

Common Sense will dictate suitable Alterations to be made in this Prayer by a Parent who has only one Child, or several Children; who is Husband or Wife, Widower or Widow.

O LORD, of Thee the whole Family in Heaven and Earth is named. All my *personal, social and relative* Blessings proceed from Thee; and on Thee I have a *constant and necessary* Dependence for every Comfort I need and desire. I praise Thee for thy *Goodness* to Me thine unworthy Servant, here presenting myself before Thee, the God of all the Families on Earth. I thank Thee for that intimate, endearing, *conjugal* Relation, into which thy kind Providence hath brought Me. “Thou fettest the Solitary in Families *,” — and “lo! Children are an Heritage of the Lord †.” I praise Thee, that “thou hast not written “me childless ‡” in the Earth, but hast been pleased “to build up my House §.” I thank Thee for that Affection and Tenderneſs which thou hast implanted in the Hearts of *Parents* towards their *Children*, which lightens their daily Labours, and softens their Cares. I praise Thee, that

* Psalm lxviii. 6.

† Psalm cxxvii. 3.

‡ Jer. xxii 30.

§ 1 Chron. xvii. 10—25.

that all [*or some of*] the Children which thou hast graciously given to thy Servant, have hitherto been spared amidst the many Diseases and Dangers with which they have been surrounded. I have devoted them to Thee in *Baptism*; and did *then*, and do *now*, acknowledge thy Right and Claim to them as thy Property, and the Disciples of thy Son.

I lament before Thee, that I have not been more thankful for them, more diligent and serious in my Attention to their Education, and especially to their *best*, their *eternal* Interests. I am ashamed and humbled for my Ingratitude to *Thee*, and for Want of a more rational and christian Affection to *Them*. I intreat thy Forgiveness of my past Neglects and Failings, through thy Son JESUS CHRIST, the great Sacrifice and Intercessor.

I beseech Thee, gracious God, to assist Me in their better Education for the future. Teach Me by thy Word and Spirit more of the great Principles and Duties of Religion, that I may wisely and faithfully teach *them* to my Children: Enable Me to behave in every Respect as a *Christian* Parent ought to do, that they may learn Wisdom and Goodness by my *Example* also.

Mercifully spare their Lives, establish their Health, and guard them from the many Dangers and Accidents to which they are exposed. May they "remember Thee,
" their

“ their Creator, in the Days of their Youth *; flee youthful Lusts †; and “ exercise themselves unto Godliness ‡.”

Preserve them from the Allurements of this vain World, the Snares of evil Company, and the Temptations of Satan. May they *contemplate* and *imitate* the Examples of early Piety contained in the Scriptures; especially *that* of thy holy Child Jesus; and, like *Him*, grow in Wisdom and Stature, and in Favour both with God and Man. May *thy* Grace restrain irregular Passions and Desires, every *dangerous* Disposition and Inclination; and cherish and strengthen every *good* Disposition in them.

I Direct Me I intreat Thee in the Disposal and Settlement of them in Life, and order every Event concerning them in the most kind and gracious Manner. May they be Comforts to Me, Ornaments to Religion, and Blessings to the World and the Church: And when I, and the dear Companion of my Life, shall be gathered to our Fathers, may our Children fill up our Places honourably and usefully, be a Seed to serve the Lord, and transmit Religion to the next Generation.

These Blessings for Ourselves (or for Myself) and for *them*, I humbly ask in the Name of Jesus Christ, our Mediator and Redeemer, to whom be Glory through all Generations for ever and ever. Amen.

Eccles. xii. 1. † 2 Tim. ii. 22. ‡ 1 Tim. iv. 7.

A PRAYER to be used by a Young Person for his [or her] Parents; and for Wisdom and Grace to improve their Instructions.

O LORD God Almighty, who fillest Heaven and Earth with thy Presence; look down with Pity on me in the Days of my Youth: I desire with all Seriousness and Reverence to look up to Thee, and address Thee, as "*my Father, who art in Heaven*:" Thou art the Former of my Body and Soul.

I thank Thee that I was born in a *Christian Land*, and in a *Christian Family*. I thank Thee that I have enjoyed many Advantages above others for gaining a Knowledge of Religion, my Duty, and the Way to be happy for ever.

I lament, and am sorry, that I have not better improved the Favours which thou hast granted me; that I have not been more grateful and obedient to my Parents, and more careful to remember and practise the Instructions I have received. I intreat thy Forgiveness of all my Sins and Failings, through thy Son JESUS CHRIST, who died to save Sinners. — I beg thy gracious Assistance that I may be disposed and enabled to attend to the Instructions I receive, and *all* agreeably to them. Lord, make me sensible of my own Ignorance and Weakness,

that

that I may be willing, and take Pains to learn *my Duty*, to fear *Thee* from my Youth, and grow *wise unto Salvation*. Keep me from Idleness, Pride, and Passion. Preserve me from every Thing which would grieve *my Parents* and *Friends*, or hinder my *Improvement* in Knowledge and Goodness.— May I *think* of the Example of thy holy Child JESUS, and *endeavour* to be *like Him* who was subject to his *earthly Parents*, and always did the Things which pleased his *heavenly Father*.

I intreat Thee to bless *all* my Relations, especially *my dear Parents*. — Spare their Lives, prosper their Affairs, and may I never *say* or *do* any Thing that may *offend* them.

May I so *improve* the Education they give me, that I may be a *Comfort* to them, be fitted for Usefulness in *this World*, and everlasting Happiness in the *next*. — May I live in Peace and Love with *every Part* of the Family, and be honest and kind to *all*. I humbly ask these Blessings in the Name of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, who ever liveth to pray for us in Heaven, and to *whom* be Glory and Praise for ever and ever. *Amen*.

A Morning and Evening Prayer for a Child from 4 or 5 to 9 or 10 Years old.

MERCIFUL God and Father, who art in Heaven, look down I beseech Thee on an *helpless Child*: Incline my Heart to re-
member

member, love, and serve Thee, and keep me from every evil Thought, Word, and Deed. May I grow in *Wisdom*, as in *Stature*, and be in Favour with God and Man. Enable me to do to *others*, as I would they should do to *me*. Make me dutiful to my Parents, loving to all my Relations, obedient to my Teachers, and always ready to hear Advice, and receive Instruction. Preserve me this Day [*or this Night*] from every Danger, and grant all my humble Petitions for the Sake of JESUS CHRIST my Saviour, in whom alone I can be accepted. *Amen.*

☞ To this short Prayer may be added the Lord's Prayer, and the Apostle's important Benediction.

OUR Father, which art in Heaven, Hallowed be thy Name;—Thy Kingdom come;—Thy Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven.—Give us this Day our daily Bread;—And forgive us our Trespases, as we forgive them that trespass against us:—And lead us not into Temptation; but deliver us from Evil:—For thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

2 COR. xiii. 14.

MAY the Grace of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, and the Love of God, and the Communion of the Holy Ghost, be with me (and with all, whom it is my Duty to remember in my Prayers) this Day [*or this Night*] and for evermore. *Amen.*

F I N I S.

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